

## Canons of the Third Ecumenical Council

### Prolegomena

The holy and ecumenical Third Council was held in Ephesus, a city situated in Asia, in the large church of that city which is called Mary Theotoke[69], in the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Little (i.e., Theodosius II), in the year 431 after Christ, numbering upwards of 200 Fathers. The “hegemons” (i.e., principal actors) therein were St. Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria illustrious among Fathers, who, acting in the place of the bishop of Rome Celestine I at first, was attending the meeting for the latter, but afterwards legates of Rome were sent from the West, namely, Arcadius, and Projectus, both of whom were bishops, and Philipp the presbyter, and Juvenal of Jerusalem, and Memnon of Ephesus. The Council was convoked against Nestorius, who hailed from the town of Germaniceia in Antiocheia, according to Theodoret, and by divine concession had ascended the throne of Constantinople. For, after quaffing and absorbing the muddy and heretical water from the outpourings of Diodorus and of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the wretch became wrong-minded in regard to the Mystery of the Incarnate Economy;[70] for he divided the one Christ into two persons and substances, remolding Him into a mere human being with a humanlike substance, apart from the conjoined Logos, and a God only by stretching a point, destitute of the assumption of humanity. That is to say, he divided the one Son into two sons, calling one of them the Son of God, and the other the son of the Virgin. Wherefore he was unwilling to call the Virgin, who was His mother with respect to the flesh, a Theotoke (a Greek word meaning “she who has given birth to God or to a God,” and much used in the Orthodox Church as a designation of the Holy Virgin). So, therefore, this holy Council anathematized[71] Nestorius on account of these views, and drew up its own definition of faith,[72] wherein it dogmatized Christ to be one with respect to substance, a perfect God the same, and a perfect human being the same, not another, and another, but one Son, the same, above motherless out of a Father, but below fatherless out of a mother. But it has delivered and handed down through all later generations the sacred injunction to the effect that His ever-virgin Mother is properly and truly to be called the Theotoke, on the ground that she truly and properly speaking gave birth in the flesh to God.[73] For when the exarch of this Council, I mean Cyril of Alexandria, proclaimed therein the following: “We are not preaching a deified human being, but, on the contrary, we are confessing a God become incarnate. He who was motherless with respect to essence, and fatherless with respect to economy on the earth, subscribed to His own handmaid as His Mother.” In the letter to Nestorius, on the other hand, which this Third Council made a definition of its own (as Dositheus says, and as is made manifest by the minutes of the Fourth Council, on p. 61 of the second volume of the Conciliar Records), which commenced as follows: “They spend their time in idle twaddle, as I learn. The same Cyril says the following: To become incarnate and to assume a human personality (called in Greek ensarcosis and enanthropesis respectively) betokens the Logos derived from God; since it was not that the nature of the Logos was transformed into flesh, but neither that it was changed into a whole human being consisting of a soul and body. Rather it is to be said that the Logos united to Himself, with respect to substance and substantiality flesh animated by a rational soul, and in an incomprehensible and inexpressible manner He became a human being, and actually lived as a son of man, not merely with respect to will and volition or complaisance, but neither as in an assumption of a personality alone; and that the natures conjoined for the purpose of unity were different, but from both there resulted one Christ and Son, not because the difference of the natures was eliminated or abrogated on account of the union, but rather that the two natures formed for us the one Lord and Christ and Son, of divinity and of humanity, through and by virtue of the inexpressible and ineffable concurrence for unity. . . . And again, if we forego the union with respect to substance either as unattainable or as having no attraction, we fall into the error of asserting that there were two Sons. . . . And again, this is professed everywhere by the words of the exact faith. Thus we shall find the Holy Father to have believed. Thus they have had the courage to call the Holy Virgin a Theotoke, not as the origin of the nature of the Logos, or, more specifically speaking, of His Godhood, as having received being from the Holy Virgin, but as having been the source out of which His holy body was begotten and furnished with a rational soul, to which body having become united with respect to substance, the Logos is said to have been begotten with respect to flesh.” (See this letter also in the second volume of the Conciliar Records on p. 436 thereof.) And the bishop of Cyzicus at that time in the great (or large) Church, Proclus, while Nestorius the heresiarch was sitting there, retorted in the following fashion: “We have been called together here by the holy and virgin Theotoke Mary, the untarnished jewel of virginity, the rational Paradise of the second Adam, the workshop wherein was wrought the union of the two natures, the panegyris of the salvatory exchange, etc.” After ordaining that no one may dare compose or write any other Creed than the one issued by the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, or even add anything thereto, or subtract anything therefrom, and anathematized all who might violate this command. In addition, this Council confirmed the condemnation of Pelagius and of Celestius, which they had received from many local synods and regional councils, and especially from the Council held in Carthage. Besides all these things, it also promulgated the present eight Canons, and published this letter to Pamphylia in its seventh and last act. These are necessary<sup>1</sup> to the discipline and constitution of the Church, and they were confirmed indefinitely in c. I of the 4th, and by name and definitely in c. II of the 6th and in c. I of the 7th.

**1**

Since those who for any reason, whether of an ecclesiastical or of corporeal nature, are absent from the holy Council and have remained in their own town or district, ought not to be left in ignorance of the Council's regulations regarding them, we make known to your holiness and love that if any Metropolitan of the province has apostatized from the holy and ecumenical Council and joined the convocation of the apostasy, or has joined it thereafter, or has adopted the sentiments of Celestius or intends to adopt them, he shall have no power whatsoever to perpetrate anything against the Bishops of the province, being already expelled and bereft of every function and of all ecclesiastical communion by the Council here. Moreover, he shall be liable in any case, to be expelled from the rank of the episcopate by the very Bishops of the province and by surrounding Metropolitans who adhere to the beliefs of Orthodoxy.

**Interpretation**

This Canon notifies those absent from the Council of the deposition from office of John of Antioch, of Theodoret the bishop of Cyrus, of Ibas the bishop of Edessa, and of the thirty bishops who stayed with them or sympathized with them,[74] by saying: Since the bishops who failed to appear at this holy Council on account of any obstacle, whether ecclesiastical or corporeal ought to be apprised of all proceedings affecting them, we notify your loving group that any metropolitan that has separated from this holy and Ecumenical Council and has joined the congress of apostasy, the one of Nestorius, that is to say, and of John and his party, or that intends to join it hereafter, or that has entertained the heretical views held by Celestius,[75] the same shall have no power to do any ill turn to the bishops, or even to the laymen, that are Orthodox, that is to say, because he (sc. any such metropolitan) has been deprived of every ecclesiastical communion and sacred function by this Council, and because he is to be rendered utterly destitute hereafter and henceforth of the rank of the episcopate even by those same Orthodox bishops and surrounding metropolitans.

**2**

If, on the other hand, any provincial Bishops have failed to attend the holy Council and have joined the apostasy, or should attempt to do so, or even after subscribing to the deposition of Nestorius have receded to the convocation of apostasy, all such persons, in the judgment that has seemed best to the Holy Council, have alienated themselves from holy orders and have forfeited their rank.

**Interpretation**

This Canon, too, like the first one, says that in case any bishops from the province of Antiocheia have absented themselves from the Council, whether it be that they have united with the apostasy of the other one held in Antiocheia, or that they intend to join it hereafter, or that even after signing and confirming the document deposing Nestorius from office they have turned back to his apostatic group — as for these persons, I say, it has appeared reasonable to the Holy Council for them to be strangers to holy orders and outcasts from the rank of the episcopate.

**3**

If some of the clergymen in any city or district have been shorn of holy orders by Nestorius and his party on account of their believing rightly, we have adjudged it right and just that they be restored to their own rank. We collectively bid the clergymen who agree in their beliefs with the orthodox and ecumenical Council not to submit in any way whatever to the Bishops who have apostatized or have deserted us.

**Interpretation**

Because of the fact that when Nestorius was Patriarch of Constantinople he excommunicated and deposed those clergymen who did not agree with him, and, moreover, even the bishops in other countries who held his views did the same, therefore the present Canon judged it right for those who had been thus deposed to receive back their own rank. Accordingly, speaking generally, it ordered that those clergymen who were of the same mind as this orthodox and Ecumenical Council should take care not to submit in any way whatever to the apostate bishops.

**4**

If any of the clergymen should apostatize and dare, either publicly or privately, to hold the beliefs of Nestorius or of Celestius, the holy Council has deemed it just and right that these men too should be deposed from office.

### **Interpretation**

This Canon too, like the preceding one, deals with those clergymen who should apostatize, and, either in public or in private, should dare to believe or teach the dogma, or doctrine, of Nestorius and of Celestius, who shared his sentiments, by saying that it has been deemed but just by the holy Council for any such persons to be deposed from their rank.

### **5**

As for all those who have been condemned by the holy Council, or by their own Bishops, for improper acts, and to whom Nestorius and those sharing his views and beliefs have sought, or should seek, to give back communion or rank, uncanonically and in accordance with the indifference shown by Nestorius in all matters, we have deemed it right and just that they too remain without benefit and that they be left nevertheless deposed from office.

### **Interpretation**

The present Canon specifies that as regards all those clergymen who on account of any sins calling for excommunication or deposition from office were excommunicated or deposed from office by this holy Council or by their own bishops, and whom Nestorius and his sympathizers either dared to give a pardon absolving them from excommunication or restoring them to the operation of holy orders, or shall dare to do so hereafter, without discriminating between what is allowable and what is not allowable, we have judged it but right, I say, that all such persons shall remain without the benefit of any such uncanonical pardon and be left again deposed from office precisely as before.

### **6**

Likewise in regard to any persons who should wish to alter in any way whatsoever anything that has been enacted in the holy Council in Ephesus concerning anyone, the holy Council has prescribed that if they be Bishops or clergymen, they are to lose their own rank entirely, while if they be laymen, they are to be excluded from communion.

### **Interpretation**

The preceding Canons are more particular, while this one simply decrees in a general way that all those persons who dare to alter in any way whatever has been enacted as concerning any question in the Council held in Ephesus, are to be deposed from office if they are bishops or clergymen, or excommunicated if they are laymen.

### **7**

These things having been read aloud, the holy Council then decreed that no one should be permitted to offer any different belief or faith, or in any case to write or compose any other, than the one defined by the Holy Fathers who convened in the city of Nicaea, with Holy Spirit. As for those who dare either to compose a different belief or faith, or to present one, or to offer one to those who wish to return to recognition of the truth, whether they be Greeks or Jews, or they be members of any heresy whatever, they, if Bishops or Clergymen, shall be deprived as Bishops of their Episcopate, and as Clergymen of their Clericcate; but if they are Laymen, they shall be anathematized. In an equally applicable way, if any persons be detected or caught, whether Bishops or Clergymen or Laymen, in the act of believing or teaching the things embodied in the exposition (or dissertation) presented by Charisius the Presbyter concerning the inhomination (i.e., incarnation) of the Only-begotten Son of God, or, by any chance, the unholy and perverse dogmas of Nestorius, which have even been subjoined, let them stand liable to the judgment of this holy and Ecumenical Council. As a consequence, that is to say, the Bishop shall be deprived of his Episcopate, and be left deposed from office, while the Clergyman likewise forfeit his Clericcate. If, on the other hand, any such person be a Layman, let him too be anathematized, as aforesaid.

### **Interpretation**

In view of the fact that at this holy and Ecumenical Council's meeting there were read both the Creed of the holy and Ecumenical First Council held in Nicaea, and the Creed of Jewish-minded Nestorius, in which his unholy dogmas were set forth and which Charisius the presbyter of Philadelphia brought to the Council, after they had been read, this holy Council issued this Canon decreeing that it is not permissible for anyone to compose and write, or to offer to those converted from any other faith to Orthodoxy another Creed[76] than the Symbol of the Faith denned and decreed by the Holy Fathers who assembled in the city of Nicaea and were enlightened by the Holy Spirit. As for those persons who shall dare to compose any other symbol of faith (or creed), or to present it openly, and to offer it to any of the Greeks and Jews and heretics turning away from faith to recognition and knowledge of the truth, such persons, if they be bishops and clergymen, are to be expelled from their episcopate and clericcate, respectively, but if laymen they shall be anathematized. Similarly, too, all those

who are discovered to be thinking to themselves or to be teaching others the unholy and heretical dogmas of Nestorius concerning the incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God, contained in the exposition of faith composed by him, but brought to this Council by the presbyter named Charisius, these persons also, I say, if they be bishops and clergymen, are to stand deposed, and expelled from their episcopate and clericate, respectively; but if they be laymen, they are to be anathematized, as we said before.

## 8

Our fellow Bishop Reginus, most beloved by God, and with him the most God-beloved Bishops of the province of the Cypriotes Zeno and Evagrius, has announced an innovation, a thing which is contrary to the ecclesiastical laws and the Canons of the Holy Apostles, and one which touches the freedom of all. Hence, since common ailments require more drastic treatment, on the ground that they do greater damage, and especially in view of the fact that the Bishop of Antioch, far from following the ancient custom, has been performing the ordinations in Cyprus, according to information given in libelli and by oral statements made by most pious gentlemen who have approached the Holy Council; therefore those who preside over the churches in Cyprus shall retain their privilege unaffected and inviolate, according to the Canons of the Holy Fathers and ancient custom, whereby they shall themselves perform the ordinations of the most reverent Bishops. The same rule shall hold good also with regard to the other diocese and churches everywhere, so that none of the Bishops most beloved by God shall take hold of any other province that was not formerly and from the beginning in his jurisdiction, or was not, that is to say, held by his predecessors. But if anyone has taken possession of any and has forcibly subjected it to his authority, he shall regive it back to its rightful possessor, in order that the Canons of the Fathers be not transgressed, nor the secular fastus be introduced, under the pretext of divine services; lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His own blood.[77] It has therefore seemed best to the holy and Ecumenical Council that the rights of every province, formerly and from the beginning belonging to it, be preserved clear and inviolable, in accordance with the custom which prevailed of yore; each Metropolitan having permission to take copies of the proceedings for his own security. If, on the other hand, anyone introduce any form conflicting with the decrees which have now been sanctioned, it has seemed best to the entire holy and Ecumenical Council that it be invalid and of no effect.

(Ap. c. XXXV; c. II of the 2nd; c. XX of the 6th; cc. XIII, XXII of Antioch; cc. III, IX, XII of Sardica; Ap. c. XXXIV; cc. VI, VII of the 1st; c. XX of the 2nd; cc. XXXVI, XXXIX of the 6th; c. IX of Antioch.)

### Interpretation

Inasmuch as Cyprus, so far as concerned secular administration, was subject to the Duke of Antioch, and was wont to send it an army commander (or general), it came to pass that the Bishop of Antioch, in imitation of this secular and civil form and law, undertook to show authority over that same Cyprus, with regard to both the religious and the ecclesiastical administration, by ordaining the bishops in Cyprus extra-territorially and not as a matter of ancient custom. This, however, was a thing that was contrary to Ap. cc. XXXIV and XXXV. After receiving Archbishop Reginus of Constantia, which used to be called Salamis but is now known as Amochostos, and the bishops accompanying, namely, Zeno of Cyrene, and Evagrius of Solon, who in writing as well as viva voce reported these facts, the Council decrees by the present Canon that, in accordance with the Canons and in accordance with ancient custom, the Metropolitans of Cyprus are themselves to ordain the bishops in Cyprus, and to be left unmolested and unconstrained by anyone else. But, making the Canon general and catholic, the Fathers of this Council add that this same rule shall hold also in regard to diocese (or administrations) and provinces everywhere else, to the end that no bishop be permitted to usurp and appropriate any other province that has not formerly and from the beginning been subject either to his authority or to that of his predecessors. If, nevertheless, anyone should appropriate it forcibly, he must return it, in order that the Canons of the Fathers be not transgressed, and in order that prelates, under the pretext of sacerdotalism, may not cloak a secret ambition and vainglorious yearning for secular or worldly authority, and hence becoming slaves to injustice lose little by little the freedom which the liberator of all men Jesus Christ has graciously given us with His own blood; it has appeared reasonable to this holy Ecumenical Council that the righteous and just privileges be kept clear and inviolable which formerly and from the beginning as a matter of ancient custom each province has been entitled to. Accordingly, each Metropolitan shall have permission to receive a transcript of the present Canon for security and confirmation of the privileges of his metropolis. If, on the other hand, anyone should come out with a form, i.e., a civil law or royal decree, contrary to the present Canon, it has appeared reasonable to all this holy Council for that civil law to remain invalid and ineffective.[78] Read also the Interpretations of Ap. cc. XXXIV and XXXV.

### **Letter of Third Council addressed to the sacred Synod in Pamphylia in favor of Eustathius**

Seeing that the God-inspired Bible says, “Do everything heedfully” (Prov. 25:29 Seirach), those who have had the fortune to be admitted to holy orders ought indeed to give especial consideration to what is to be done in every case with all exactitude. For thus will they live through life with their affairs hopefully arranged and will be carried onward as though by a favorable wind to the goal which is the most desirable; and it seems that this argument is reasonable enough. Yet in the course of time a bitter and unendurable sorrow overwhelmed the mind and terribly muddled it, and failing to reap its expectations, it found little of benefit to comfort it in regard to the unjust circumstances of its plight. We have seen some such misfortune overtake most reverent and most godly Eustathius. For though he was indeed ordained canonically, as has been attested, yet, having been embarrassed, as he says, by some persons, and having met with unseemly circumstances, and owing to his being too much accustomed to idleness he got tired of the cares heaped upon him, and being unable to put up with the fear of incurring defamation as a result of developments, we know not how, he turned in an account. For, once having accepted the responsibility of sacerdotal cares, he ought to have kept on with spiritual staunchness and to have made every effort to discharge his duties even at the expense of much pain and perspiration voluntarily as one receiving remuneration. But since, once having failed to cope with the situation, he proved incapable, though rather as a result of idleness than of laziness and indolence, your godliness necessarily ordained our most reverent and most godly brother and fellow Bishop Theodore to take care of the church. For the position could not be left open and remain without anyone to look after the flocks of the Savior. But inasmuch as he came back weeping, not about losing the city or by way of quarreling over the fact that the church was turned over to the said most godly Bishop Theodore, but begging for the honor and title of bishop he had been enjoying up till then, we all felt sorry for him because of his being an old man, and deeming his tears a common ground of sympathy, we hastened to learn whether the man had suffered any legal deposition or had been charged by other persons with improprieties while muttering things to the detriment of his reputation, and, indeed, we learned that nothing of the sort had occurred, but that instead of any indictment being brought against him the man himself had submitted his resignation. Hence we could not blame your godliness for dutifully replacing him by the said most reverent Bishop Theodore. But since there is no strong reason to quarrel with his incapacity, we ought rather to have mercy on the old man, who had been away from his city and far from home for a long time, we have deemed just and have decreed without any argument that he should retain both the name of bishop and the honor and communion of the episcopate; but in such manner as not to permit him to perform ordinations nor to officiate in divine services in church on his own account, unless by any chance taken along or allowed to do so by a brother and fellow bishop, in pursuance of affection and love in Christ. But if you care to give him a better position of any kind, either now or hereafter, this will please the holy Council.

### **Interpretation**

This Eustathius, of whom the present letter speaks, was bishop of Pamphylia, a province in Attaleia. But after becoming engrossed in the cares and matters of the episcopate, and getting tired on account of his faintheartedness and inexperience in regard to the affairs and temptations of the episcopate, he tendered a written resignation. Hence the Synod there ordained another bishop in place of him. However, he afterwards came to this holy Ecumenical Council with tears in his eyes and begging, not for the episcopate which he had resigned, but to have the honor and name of a bishop. Feeling sorry for him and sympathizing with him on account of his advanced age and tears and the fact that he was far from home and hearth, and particularly because of the fact that his resignation had not been submitted after a threat of deposition for viciousness, not on account of his carelessness and indolence (for if such had been the case, of course the Council would not have been warranted in showing him mercy, nor would it have bestowed upon him the mere name of bishop), but because of his faintheartedness and incapacity for affairs, the Council decreed that he should have the title of bishop, or, in other words, the right to call himself a bishop, and the honor, or, in other words, the right to sit down with bishops, and the communion, or, in other words, the right to partake of communion along with them, and to officiate with them, and to assist in ordinations the other bishops, though not to perform any himself of his own accord, but only with the permission of the local bishop. In addition the Council says to the bishops of Pamphylia, that in case they should think of something better and higher to give to Eustathius, either now or hereafter, this will please the Council too. This means nothing else, according to the exegete Anonymus, than the possibility of their appointing him bishop in some vacant province.[79]

### **Notes**

[69] This is stated in the letter of Cyril addressed to the clergy of Alexandria, and in the first act of this Council.

[70] I said that Nestorius became wrong-minded and blasphemous in regard to the mystery of the incarnate economy, because in the matter of the theology of the Holy Spirit he had not been blaspheming, since he confessed in his Creed: “We do not deem the Holy Spirit either a Son or to have acquired Its existence through the Son, being as It is of the essence of God, not a Son, but being in essence a God, as being of that very same essence that God the Father is of, out of whom It really derives Its essence.” That it was only in regard to the incarnation of Christ that he became blasphemous is manifest:

A) from c. VII of this same Council, wherein the Council states that “all bishops and clergymen or laymen that entertain the unholy dogmas or doctrines, of Nestorius concerning the incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God shall forfeit their office.” Do you see that it specifies definitely that it is speaking of the dogmas of Nestorius concerning the incarnation of the Only-begotten? B) from the letter which the same Council sent to the emperors concerning Nestorius, in which it wrote as follows: “After examining the impious dogmas which he (sc. Nestorius) has set forth in writing concerning the incorporation of the Lord Christ, we anathematized those very ones.” But what is there to show that he did not blaspheme in regard to the theology of the Holy Spirit? Two other facts: A) that, since the theology concerning the Trinity is greater than that concerning the incarnate economy, as is acknowledged by all theologians, how could divine Cyril possibly have taken him to task as concerning the incarnation, yet have maintained silence as concerning the theology of the Holy Spirit, at a time when Chrysoloras denounced Demetrius Cydones by saying, “he that has blasphemed in regard to the Son shall be forgiven, but he that has blasphemed in regard to the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven”? and at a time when, as Macarius the bishop of Ancyra said in ch. 67, that it was the more necessary and urgent to ascertain the matter of the theology first, and that of the economy afterwards? for the former has precedence of the latter. B) It is proved from the pusillanimity and dispute which arose between St. Cyril and blessed Theodoret, and which, though not a fine thing nor anything to be praised, was nevertheless economically allowed by God to occur, in order that the true notion concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit might be conspicuously manifested. For when St. Cyril wrote in his ninth anathematization that the Spirit is something belonging to the Son, Theodoret said in refuting him: “True enough, the Spirit is something belonging to the Son: if he means something of the same nature and proceeding out of the Father, we shall agree with him, and shall accept his utterance as a pious one; but if he means to say that the Holy Spirit is derived from the Son, or that It has Its existence through and by virtue of the Son, we shall reject this notion as blasphemous and as recusant. For we believe the Lord when He says “the Spirit, which proceedeth out of the Father” (page 580 of the first volume of the conciliar records). When Theodoret put the matter thus, divine Cyril offered no objection, but, on the contrary, admitted that what he said was true, and merely explained in what way he had meant that the Spirit belonged to the Son. For he says in the apology (i.e., answer) which he wrote in reply to Theodoret’s refutation: “Though the Holy Spirit does proceed out of the Father, as declared by the Savior, yet It is something not alien to the Son” (ibid.). But what is the meaning of the expression “something not alien to”? Divine Cyril himself undertook to elucidate this further in his conciliar letter to Nestorius, by saying: “It is something not alien to the Son in respect of essence” (which is the same as to say that It is of the same essence, or co-essential. Accordingly, in interpreting the Creed the same saint says: “The Spirit is effused, or poured forth, or, in another word, proceeds, from God the Father precisely as from a wellspring, though It is supplied to creation through the Son.” Wherefore in view of the fact that Cyril had capped this apology as a reply from Alexandria to Antioch with Paul of Ephesus Theodoret wrote to John of Antioch as follows: “What has now been sent is embellished with evangelical nobility. For it is proclaimed therein that God is perfect, and our Lord Jesus Christ is perfect, and that the Holy Spirit is not derived from the Son and does not have Its existence through and by virtue of the Son, but that It proceeds out of the Father, though it is said to belong to the Son, on the ground that It is co-essential, or of the same essence.” So that inasmuch as Nestorius and Theodoret believed aright in regard to the theology of the Holy Spirit, therefore divine Cyril did not censure them, either before they were reconciled with Theodoret or later after they had been reconciled; but then again neither did anyone else besides Cyril do so, nor did this Third Council. That is why Joseph Bryennius as well as Nile of Thessalonica agree in saying that the strongest and most ingenuous proof of the Orthodoxy of us Eastern Christians is the fact that Nestorius wrote in his Creed that the Holy Spirit proceeds out of the Father, and not out of the Son, nor that It has Its existence through or by virtue of the Son, and the fact that the Third Council accepted this Creed and did not object to it in the least. So prattling Aquinas is slandering, yes, slandering the Eastern Church when he describes it as Nestorian because it dogmatizes that the Holy Spirit does not proceed also out of the Son, as the Papists blasphemously assert. For if our Church were indeed Nestorian on this account, divine Cyril would be a Nestorian, the Third Ecumenical Council would be Nestorian, and the subsequent Church too, for all of them have likewise accepted and recognized this dogma, and it was and is a catholic tenet of the Church. But, as a matter of fact, Cyril, and the Third Council, and the subsequent Church were not Nestorian. Hence it is logically evident that neither is the Eastern Church Nestorian, as she agrees with Cyril and all the Church. But if it be objected that the Papists assert that the Creed of Nestorius was condemned in the Third and Fourth Councils, we reply that it was condemned, true enough, but only as pertaining to the incarnate economy, and not as concerning the theology of the Holy Spirit. For divine Cyril wrote to Eulogius that we ought not to eschew and abandon everything that heretics say. And Athanasius the Great stated that the Arians held correct views in addition to their heretical views (see pp. 495-7 of the Dodecabilus).

[71] After recusant Nestorius was anathematized by the present Council, since, instead of becoming quiet, he went on preaching again his cacodoxical heresy, first, according to Theophanes, he was exiled to Thasus, and afterwards to the oasis of Arabia with the co-operation of John of Antioch. While living there the scoundrel experienced afflictions of divine indignation. His tongue rotted, according to Evagrius, and all his body, according to Cedrenus, and Nicephorus (book 14 of

his history); and in upper Thebais he met with a fearful and painful death, as told by St. Germanus of Constantinople in what he relates about the holy Councils. For in the reign of Emperor Marcianus, with the co-operation of some of his friends, Nestorius was enabled to receive letters recalling him from exile. After receiving these, then, and upon entering the privy, before sitting down he said aloud, as some listeners standing outside heard “I have shown thee, Mary, that thou gavest birth to a human being.” Thereupon, what a miracle! directly with the utterances of this blasphemy, an angel of the Lord smote him a terrible blow and his entrails exuded into the vessel containing his excrements, and he expired then and there. Because of his delay in coming out of the place and the fact that the imperial magistrate sent with the letters was in a hurry, his servants knocked on the door. As Nestorius failed to answer, they took out the door and they and the magistrate came in and found him dead in the privy in which all his entrails were spilled. Then those who had heard the blasphemy told it to the magistrate, and they all saw that it was solely on account of this that he met with such a death, similar to that of Arius, and they exclaimed: “It was in reference to this man that Isaiah said, ‘Woe unto this man! They shall not weep for him, O Lord. Neither shall they even say to him, Alas, O brother! and, What a pity, O Lord! A burial now he shall not be given, but, after joining those who have croaked, he shall be hurled beyond the gate’” (Jer. 22:18-19). Note, however, that after the heresy of Nestorius became neglected, it was renewed later during the reign of Justinian the emperor by a certain bishop of Nisibis named Barsoumas, who spread it in the East, and on this account there are exceedingly many Nestorians in the East, and especially in the land of the Persians and Assyrians, and in the vicinity of the Euphrates and Nisibis.

[72] Some say that because it was ordained in the present Council that the All-holy Virgin should be called the Theotoke, as in truth she is the Theotoke (because of the fact that she gave birth to a God), St. Cyril wanted to have this written into the holy Creed of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, but out of reverence for the Creed he gave up this intention and all that is referred to in the Footnote to c.VII of the present Council in this connection may be found there. Having made a sole definition of their own, the Fathers dogmatized it in that Canon. For though they recognized the unity, with respect to substance, of the God Logos — which is the same thing as to say the one substance of Christ as revealed by the Creed, they did not want to add it therein. For in view of the fact that the Fathers confessed therein the Son of God, begotten out of the Father, come down (out of heaven), and having become incarnate as a human being, it is obvious that they confess one and the same Christ with respect to substance, a real God, and a real human being the same, but not another, and another. The union with respect to substance, however, according to the holy Patriarch of Constantinople Nicephorus, “one with the other one, the two out of which the Savior derives (sc. His two natures), as who should say, the unseen and the seen, the passible and the indefectible. Not another and another, God forbid! But a God the same perfect, and a human being perfect the same” (in the letter he sent to Pope Leo; page 912 of the second volume of the Councils). This is the same thing as saying that the union, with respect to substance, in Christ signifies both the two natures unconfused and the single substance with respect to which these natures were inconfutably united. Concerning union with respect to substance, see also the Footnotes to the Prolegomena of the Fourth Ec. C. But note that the Lord’s human nature (i.e., His humanity as distinguished from His divinity) possessed all the substantial properties that the substances of the rest of men have, except for the total property, according to the said Cyril, which is, that of not really being by itself, like those, but, on the contrary, of having received being in the substance of the God Logos. For this property of substances is, so to speak, the basis and foundation of all their other properties. It is for this reason that it is called the total property, too.

[73] Note that just as the (the Greek word meaning the same thing as the English) word co-essential was one to which the Fathers were accustomed even before the First Ecum. Council, though the latter sanctioned the use of this word, and imparted it to the whole world, so and in like manner had other Fathers called the Virgin Mary a Theotoke even before this Third Council. But this Council, having sanctioned this sweetest appellative of the Virgin, imparted it as a dogmatic definition to the whole world and handed it down through all later generations. Origen was the first one to call the Virgin a Theotoke, in interpreting verse 33 of chapter 22 of Deuteronomy (pp. 15 and 54 of the first volume of the series of the Fathers (in the Patrologia); but also Socrates (in Book 7 of his History, ch. 32) says that Origen himself while engaged in a comprehensive examination of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans found out how the Virgin came to be called the Theotoke. Cyril of Alexandria, in writing to Nestorius, says that even Athanasius the Great called Her the Theotoke, and Amman the Bishop of Adrianoupolis concurred, just as Alexander of Alexandria called the All-holy Virgin the Theotoke in writing to Alexander of Constantinople (the one, that is, who presided at the First Ec. C.). Again, Basil, in his discourse on the birth of Christ, says: “The Theotoke never ceased being a virgin, because She would not displease the ears of Christ-lovers.” Those testimonies, I take it, are self-sufficient. But it may be added here that Gregory the Theologian, in his first letter to Cledonius, says: “If there be anyone that does not consider Mary to be a Theotoke, he is destitute of divinity.” And in his first discourse concerning the Son, in addressing the Greeks, he says: “For where among your deities have you known a Virgin Theotoke?” Eusebius, in his Life of Constantine (ch. 43) and Socrates (Book 7, ch. 32) say: “Wherefore indeed the most God-revering Queen (i.e., Helena) with wonderful tombstones gorgeously decorated the Theotoke’s birthplace” (i.e., Bethlehem). Dionysius of Alexandria said to Paul of Samosata: “the one who became incarnate out of the holy Virgin and

Theotoke Mary.” St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (or Miracle-worker) of Neocaesarea, in his discourse on the Annunciation, says these following words: “The holy Theotoke, therefore, gave voice to the song of this prophecy by exclaiming, ‘ “My soul doth magnify the Lord” ’ (Luke 1:46). Only the All-holy Virgin is called a Theotoke, according to the explanatory remark of Zonaras in commenting upon some troparion of the canons of the Octoechus of Damascene, by way of contrast with the women among the Greeks who were mythologically asserted to have given birth to their inexistent pseudo gods.

The Virgin is called the Theotoke as having truly given birth to God, the accent being upon the last syllable, and not Theotocus, with the accent on the antepenult, which would signify “having been begotten by God spiritually,” as recusant and man-worshipping Nestorius called her. For in this manner all human beings have been begotten spiritually through and by virtue of baptism. But the Holy Virgin is said to be a Theotoke in two ways. One of these ways is on account of the nature and the substance of the God Logos which was given birth out of Her and which assumed humanity; and the other way is on account of the humanity assumed, which became deified as a result of that union and assumption, and attained to God-hood. (John Damascene, Concerning the Orthodox Faith, book 3, ch. 12, and elsewhere.) The holy and ecumenical Sixth Council proclaimed Her a Virgin (in its act 11 by means of the libellus of the faith of Sophronius of Jerusalem) before giving birth, and in giving birth, and after giving birth: which is the same as saying ever-virgin. Concerning St. Epiphanius (Haer. 78) says: “Who, having said Mary, and having been asked whom he meant, ever failed to answer by adding the Virgin?” And St. Jerome (Dialogue Second against Pelagius) said: “Christ alone opened the closed portals of the Virgin’s womb, and thereafter these remained thenceforth shut (this word “opened” denotes that the Lord fecundated the womb, just as, in the opposite case, the womb is said to be shut in the sense that the womb is barren because of sterility: in accordance with that passage in Genesis saying: “God had shut fast every womb from without” (Gen. 20:18); or it may be said to denote “parted asunder,” but without injury, and not like the rest of infants). She is declared to be ever-virgin also the first Canon of the Sixth Ecum. C., held in the Trullus.

[74] Note that the minutes of this Council are divided into three parts. Thus, the first part contains various homilies and letters. The second part contains its acts, which were seven, according to Dositheus, but five according to the Collection of the Councils, and these include the second minutes of the apostatic convocation (or council) gathered round John of Antioch. The third part embraces St. Cyril’s interpretation in regard to its twelve chapters, or to say the same thing in other words, the twelve anathematizations directed against the unholy dogmas of Nestorius, and the objection of the Easterners to them, and the apology (or reply) of St. Cyril to their objections; it also contains the refutation of the same anathematization by Theodoret, and the apology again of the same Cyril to these refutations; it further contains the promotion of Maximianus to the throne of Constantinople, and the pacification of Cyril with John by aid of the emperor’s co-operation; all of which matters are to be found written in Dositheus from page 279 to page 287 of the Dodecabilus, as well as in the first volume of the Collection of the Councils from page 357 to page 654, that is to say, to the end thereof.

[75] Celestius, a follower of his teacher Pelagius, agreed with Nestorius in his heresy, according to sacred Photius (Anagmosma 54), since he blasphemed the Son of God, while Celestius blasphemed the Holy Spirit, as Cyril wrote to Theodosius. For, on the one hand, Nestorius asserted that “Since Christ is of our nature, while God wishes all men to be saved, and everyone can mend his fault with the exercise of his own free will, therefore not the Logos of God that was born, but the human being who was begotten out of Mary, on account of the meritoriousness of his natural free choice, had the Logos of God following (i.e., investing) him, solely by reason of his worthiness, and partook of divinity by virtue of a similarity in sense attached to the word.” Celestius, on the other hand, asserted that “it is not God, that is to say, in other words, the Holy Spirit, that apportions to whomsoever He wills the means of attaining to piety and salvation, but the nature of the human being himself which has forfeited bliss on account of sin. This, according to the meritoriousness of his free will, is either attracted (or invited) or repelled (or repulsed) by the Holy Spirit.” He also maintained that self-control (or self-assertion) takes precedence of or leads the way to grace. Hence, said he, a man’s will is sufficient for the fulfillment of God’s commandments. These wicked doctrines of Celestius were anathematized both by this Third Council and by one held before it in Carthage at the same as that of Pelagius. Concerning the heresy of this man divine Augustine also wrote something in his discussion of heresies (ch. 88). There has been found also a comment on the present Canon written by Nicholas of Hydrous and saying for one not to spell the name of Celestius with an n, as it is written in some manuscripts owing to ignorance, but without the n, Celestius. For the man named Celestinus was an Orthodox Pope, whose place, as has been said, in this Third Council was filled by Cyril, whereas Celestius was a heretic and like-minded with Nestorius, as we have said.

[76] The reason why the Council anathematized those who should undertake to compose another Creed (called in Greek “Symbol of Faith”) is as follows. St. Marcus of Ephesus in the fifth Act of the Council held in Florence says that heretics had composed more than thirty creeds against the doctrine of coessentiality (or homoousianity). One of them, recusant



Nestorius, took the opportune occasion to compose a creed of his own, and he was wont to hand it to the Greeks who were joining the Orthodox faith, and to the Jews and heretics who were doing likewise, as is explained in the present Canon. So this Third Council, foreseeing the possibility that this liberty of writing creeds might result in the introduction of some innovation into Orthodoxy, decided to forbid the writing of creeds henceforth other than that of the First and that of the Second Ecumenical Council together (for these two creeds are regarded as one) and their delivery to the public. But it did not forbid the writing of a different creed in general, or, more explicitly speaking, of one that is avowedly heretical. For this had always been forbidden even before the Third Ecumenical Council was held, not only by councils and synods and bishops, but also by every Orthodox Christian. Nor did it forbid heretics a different creed than the (Symbol of) faith of the Bishops who convened in Nicaea, even though this alone is Orthodox. For whatever the law says, the Council necessarily accedes to it. But as for the Orthodox Christians, and not this one or that one, but all of them in general, councils as well as everyone else in general, “to no one,” it says, “is this permissible,” etc. The phrase “no one,” which is one word as written in Greek, is a general and universal adjunct (or amplifier). On this point see also the explanation of the Creed of this Council which divine Cyril makes in his letter to Acacius. But, with an eye to brevity, the Council did not explicitly say: “to no one let it be permissible to compose any other exposition of faith.” Yet, that which in its Canon it neglected to say totidem verbis, this its exarch, which is the same as saying the Council itself, divine Cyril, I mean, in his letter to the Bishop of Melitine elucidates precisely, by saying: “The holy and Ecumenical Council assembled in the city of Ephesus provided that it was necessary to decree that the Church of God must not approve the admission of any exposition of faith other and different than the one really and actually adopted by the thrice-blissful Fathers speaking on behalf of the Holy Spirit.” This passage means that not only must no one compose any other Orthodox Creed than the one of the Nicene Council, but that it is not even at all permissible to offer the same Orthodox Creed itself differently worded or paraphrased, a point which was gallantly admitted and pointed out by divine Marcus of Ephesus and by Bessarion of Nicaea at the Council held in Florence. But what am I saying, “differently worded?” Why, it is not permissible for anyone to change, from the text of the holy Creed, not merely a single word, but even a single syllable. And that this is true, we have the testimony again of that very same divine Cyril himself as a witness. But when I say the name Cyril, I am saying, in effect, the whole Ecumenical Third Council. For he was its Exarch, but rather I should say that it was the Council itself that spoke through the mouth of Cyril. For the latter in writing to John of Antiocheia says verbatim: “We will under no conditions and by no means tolerate the making of the least change by anyone in faith defined, or, in other words, the Symbol of Faith of our holy Fathers who convened in Nicaea, composed at various times. In fact, we will not allow ourselves or others to change a word in the text of it, or even to transgress a single syllable of it.” But, if nobody is permitted to change a single syllable, much less is anyone permitted to add anything to it or to take anything away from it. That is why Pope Agatho at the time of the Sixth Ec. C. in writing to the Emperors of Rome said: “One thing and a fine thing too we prayerfully wish and believe to have a right to expect, and that is that nothing shall be determined of all that has been canonically defined, nor any change made therein, nor anything added thereto, but, on the contrary, that these same (dogmas) shall be preserved intact both in word and in thought.” The Seventh Ecumenical Council says: “We preserve intact the decrees of the Fathers. We anathematize those who add (anything to) or remove (anything) from the Church.” And can it be said that they said one thing and did another in point of reality? No; on the contrary, even in point of reality they actually confirmed their own words by what they did, and none of the Ecumenical Councils following the Third added anything to or removed anything from the common Creed, notwithstanding that they were hard pressed to do so. For the Third Council, although urgently pressed to add these most necessary words, as much more for complete extinction of the Nestorian heresy as for confirmation of the Orthodox belief, the union, I mean, with respect to substance, and the view concerning the Theotoke, yet, in spite of all this temptation, it did not dare to modify the sacred Creed at all, but, instead, contented itself with making a definition of its own and extraneously inserted into it these words and whatever others were needed to explain them. The Fourth Council, again, was faced with the need of adding to the common Creed the doctrine concerning the two natures of the Logos incarnate, on account of the heresy of the Monophysites, yet it did not do this. Likewise even the Fifth Council felt the need of adding something to affirm the everlasting duration of punishment in hell. And the Sixth was urged to add a declaration concerning the two activities (i.e., energies). And the Seventh was likewise hard pressed to add to the Creed an elucidation or approbation of the doctrine of the adoration of the holy icons (i.e., pictures of the saints, etc.), on account of the heretics who entertained contrary beliefs. Yet the Fathers of that Council did not dare to do this, but, instead, they preserved the common Creed free from every innovation. This, too, in spite of the fact these additional features were not really additions of independent thoughts to the Creed as respecting the faith, but were merely developments or expansions of what was already concisely or implicitly embodied in the Creed, and constituted additions of words only. Why, then, did they balk at such suggestions? Assuredly it was because the Councils were so reverently disposed towards the venerability of the Nicene Creed, and towards the definition of the Third Ec. C. which placed under anathema any addition to the Creed whether with respect to points of faith or with respect to words, that is to say. That very same venerability of the Nicene Creed, however, and this same definition of the Third Ec. C. ought, in emulation of the sacred Councils, to have been respected likewise by the Church of the Westerners, which ought not to have added thereto that illegal addition of the expression *Filioque* (meaning

“and out of the Son”), which was enough to provoke a schism, or split of the Westerners and the Easterners and to give rise to a fierce war between them, and to lead to the terrible woes, deserving tears but needlessly ensuing, which are recorded in histories and other books. But the Westerners argue captiously that just as the Second Ec. C. did not sin by adding to the Creed of the First, so must it be admitted that neither did the Church of the Westerners sin by permitting this addition. But it must be said that the likeness or similarity they allege to exist here is altogether imaginary. For the Second Ec. C., possessing the same official status as the First, added, as a matter of fact for the real and main reason that it had not been prohibited or debarred by any previous Council for anyone to add anything to the Creed (though the Council held in Sardica before the Second Ec. C. forbade anyone to propound any faith other than that of the Nicene Council, yet, inasmuch as this Council was a particular and regional council, and in view of the fact that it had spoken with reference to the Arians propounding another faith as against the doctrine of coessentiality, and not with reference to any Orthodox Ecumenical Council, it had no claim to become a teacher of the Second Ecumenical Council, which stood as the representative of the whole Church. For a regional council and a particular one always gives way to an ecumenical council, but not vice versa). A second reason is that those additions which the Second Ec. C. made to the work of the First were additions merely of words, and did not involve the matter of faith, being rather expansions of thoughts already concisely or implicitly included in the Creed. And what is the evidence for this? The Councils, which accepted the Creed of the First and that of the Second as one single Creed, called only the Nicene Creed; but not so with the words of the Second Council, held in Constantinople, because they were only a development of what was concisely and implicitly contained in the Creed of the First Ec. C.; for the Third Council in the present Canon expressly decreed that no one should be allowed to compose any different faith (or Creed) than that defined by the holy Fathers assembled in the city of Nicaea. And divine Cyril says the same thing in his letter to the Bishop of Antioch. Besides, even the Bishop of Constantinople John, and of Rome Virgilius in writing to Eutychius of Constantinople say but this one thing. And in the fifth convention held in Florence it is written as follows: “These expositions of the faith, or creeds, of the First and Second Councils, or rather the

Creed.” That the Fathers of the Second Council expanded rather than added to the Creed of the First is attested by the express statements of many. For the Sixth Ecumenical C. in its edict states: “The 150 Fathers with the inspiration of the All-holy Spirit construed the Creed called great and venerable, on the subject of the Holy Spirit, since they affirmed It to be a God in what they developed and expanded so as to make the sense stand out more boldly.” And in Justinian’s Novel addressed to Epiphanius of Constantinople Justinian himself says: “on account of the Scriptural testimonies the same lesson (that is to say, the Nicene Creed) was emphasized by the 150 holy Fathers aforesaid when they explained it more clearly.” In addition, St. Gregory the Theologian in his letter to Cledonius says: “We have never at any time preferred anything to the Nicene faith, but, on the contrary, we ourselves are of that faith, with the help of God, and we shall continue to be of that same faith, adding merely the article deficiently expressed therein concerning the Holy Spirit.” Yet, in spite of the fact that these additions of the Second Ec. C. are properly speaking but developments, as has been proved, it would be a gross violation of law for that Council to dare to add such developments if any previous council anticipating this sort of thing had prohibited any addition whatsoever in the Creed with an anathema, as did the Third Ecum. C. Hence by consequence the Westerners’ addition in the Creed is a gross violation of law and is under an anathema, not only because it is an addition that is of a nature contrary to the faith, in that it represents the Son as a caused cause, and introduces two origins into the Godhead, and a multitude of other improprieties; but also because, though supposedly a development, as they would have it appear to be, and merely an addition of words, yet it ought not on any account to have been added to the Creed, owing to the definitions of the Third Council as well as those of succeeding Ecumenical Councils, which command that the common Creed be preserved intact and altogether unchanged, and which place any addition thereinto under anathema. That is why sacred Theophylactus of Bulgaria said in writing a letter to Nicholas Diaconus: “Any innovation in the Symbol of Faith, then, is that greatest mistake, and the very one alluded to by Solomon is saying ‘making them meet under the roof of Hades.’ ” And again: “And to pardon the Westerners, therefore, would be unpardonable if anything pertaining to the dogma be changed by them to the prejudice of the faith of the Fathers, such as that which has been added in the Creed concerning the Holy Spirit, where the danger is exceedingly grave, this being left unconnected.” But, indeed, even Peter of Antioch, too, called the addition the worst of all evils. It was on account of that addition, moreover, which is wrongly chanted along with the Creed in the Church of the Romans, and has to be corrected, that Sergius of Constantinople omitted Pope Sergius IV from the commemoration, and thereupon arose the great chasm between us and the Westerners. But why should I be telling what our own churchmen say? Even John himself the Pope of Rome, who was also present by his legates Pearus, Paul and Eugenius at the Council held during the reign of Emperor Macedon, in the year 879, and accepted that Council’s definition, which runs as follows: “If anyone in defiance of this sacred Creed dare to set forth any other, or to add, or to subtract, or to name a term, or to make an addition, or a subtraction, in this Creed which has been handed down to us, he is condemnable and an alien to every Christian confession. For to subtract, or to add, is to render the confession of ours imperfect which has been looking from above down upon the Holy Trinity to this very day.” Even the Pope himself, I say, having accepted this definition, condemned the addition in the Creed, by saying: “We again are trying to make it plain to Your Reverence, in order that you have complete confidence in us as concerning this article, which was the cause of the

scandals that have arisen between the Churches of God, that not only do we not assert this belief that the Spirit proceeds out of the Son, but we even deem those who first did so, emboldened by their madness, transgressors of the divine words, and garblers of the theology of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Fathers, who, after convening in a council, imparted the holy Creed; and we put them in the same class as we do Judas.” But, then, that is not all. Even before this Pope John the Third Council held in Toledo during the reign of King Richard of Spain, A.D. 589, commanded the holy Creed to read without the addition in Spain and France, in precisely the same manner as Emperor Justinian I ordered it to be read before the Lord’s prayer, beginning “Our Father who art in heaven,” in all the churches of the East in the year 545. And Pope Leo III of Rome, in the beginning of the ninth century, when a Council was held in Aquisgrana, and therein John Monachus Hierosolymite was valiantly fighting against the addition in the Creed, upon being asked by Charles the Great what he thought about this matter, not only denounced the addition, but even went so far as to engrave the entire holy Creed without it upon two silver plaques, on the one in Greek, and on the other in Latin, which plaques he deposited in the tombs of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and placed under an anathema those who might dare to add anything to, or to subtract anything from its text, according to Cardinal (Caesar) Baronius and the Jesuit Petrovius. See also the Council held in Florence from its third to its seventeenth session, at which most courageously and gallantly our Greek representatives repudiated and stigmatized this execrable addition, while the Latins stood agasp and speechless.

We have said all this with reference to the common Symbol of Faith called the Nicene Creed. But for anyone to set forth his own personal belief in a private confession (and let it be supposed to be in the form of a creed of his own), that is not prohibited, since from the beginning and down to this day the Fathers of the Church have been making confessions of what they personally believed, and especially those to Acacius the Bishop of Melitine goes to great lengths in offering apologies in defense of certain bishops of Phoenicia, who had been blamed for making an exposition of their own creed. But this is not all. Even divine Marcus of Ephesus in Florence appears to allow this. Nevertheless, such creeds, by some called personal creeds, converted from a heresy and under suspicion. That is why divine Cyril in his letter must have the following six characteristics: 1) They must not diverge from the common confession. 2) They must not conflict with the common Creed. 3) No one must be baptized in them. 4) They must not be offered to converts from heresies. 5) They must not be presented as the common faith in private lessons. And 6) one must not add anything to or subtract anything from the common Creed and represent it as his own by incorporating it in a creed of his own. (Dositheus, in the Dodecabiblus; and others.)

[77] Note that formerly and from the beginning as a matter of ancient custom Cyprus had been autocephalous in respect of ecclesiastical administration. This privilege was sanctioned as belonging to it both by Emperor Zeno and by Justinian II, surnamed Rhinotmetus (as having had his nose cut off). For in the times of Zeno, when the Monophysites called Eutychians had a free hand, owing to the fact that Peter Knapheus of Antioch was doing his utmost to gain control of the Cyprians, on the pretense that the Cyprians had received their faith and Christianity from Antioch, it came to pass that the bishop of Amochostos named Anthemitus discovered through revelation the sacred remains (or relics) of the Holy Apostle Barnabas underneath the underground roots of a carob tree, bearing upon his breast the Gospel according to St. Matthew written in Greek by Barnabas himself with his own hands, for two reasons, to wit: first, in order to shame the followers of Eutyches by means of that divine Gospel because of the fact that the latter affirms the true humanity of Christ, and His two natures; and secondly, in order to shut the mouth of Peter who had his eye on Cyprus. For divine Barnabas said to Anthemitus: “If the enemies assert that the throne of Antiocheia is an Apostolic one, tell them that so is Cyprus Apostolic because it has an Apostle in its ground.” Taking the Gospel with him, Anthemitus departed for Constantinople and went to Zeno, who rejoiced greatly when he beheld it with his own eyes, and, keeping it safely in his possession, he ordered it to be read every year on Good Friday (called in Greek “Great Friday”), according to the Chronicle of Joel. And not only did he appoint Acacius to consider the case of Cyprians and Antiochians (wherein, presenting the present Canon of the Third Ec. C., and the words of the Apostle, Anthemitus shamed the Antiochians), but he even made Amochostos an archdiocese free from any molestations attempted by the bishop of Antioch, according to Cyril the monk and Theodore the anagnost and Suidas. After renewing the decorations of that same Amochostos or Salamis, according to Balsamon, Justinian Rhinotmetus renamed it New Justiniana. Hence those who assert that it was a second Justiniana are mistaken. For Achris was the first to be called Justiniana; the second to be called Justinana was Ulpiana, some town that was situated in Dardania and was renewed and redecored by Justinian, on which account c. XXXIX of the Sixth Ec. C. calls Cyprus New Justinianopolis. And, confirming the present Canon, it says for the Bishop of Cyzicus to preside over the whole province of the Hellespontians, too, and to ordain its bishop. But Chrysanthus (p. 84 of the Syntagma) says that Carthage was the first autocephalous archdiocese; and Cyprus was the second, because this c. VIII of the 3rd had honored it as autocephalous even before Justinian, that is to say; the third was Achris, because it was honored as autocephalous during the reign of Justinian in the time of the Fifth Council; the fourth was lower Iberia, as having been honored in the time of Leo III (the Isaurian); the fifth

was upper Iberia, as having been honored during the reign of Monomachus; the sixth was that of Pecius, as having been honored in the time of the emperors in Nicaea.

[78] See the commencement of this handbook in order to learn that civil laws conflicting with the Canons are invalid.

[79] Many have concluded from this letter that prelates are permitted to resign from their own province, but yet to retain the honor and activity of the prelacy. Such persons, however, are in error. Quite the contrary is rather to be inferred from the letter, according to Zonaras, Balsamon, and Blastaris. Thus, first of all, it is patent from the words of the letter that resignations ought not to occur. For it says, in paraphrase, that “once having been given the care of an episcopate, Eustathius ought to have borne it with spiritual courageousness, to have made every effort to cope with the troubles involved in the situation, and voluntarily to have endured the perspiration deserving reward in behalf of the episcopate.” This same inference may be drawn also from the surprise felt by the Council when it saw the written resignation of Eustathius. For if it had been customary and allowable for resignations to be offered, how could it have been astonished at such an event as though some new and strange thing had occurred; for it says, in paraphrase, “we do not know how and why he came to turn in an account in resignation of his office.” But this is confirmed also by the exarch of this Council Cyril (who appears, from the wording and phraseology of this letter, to have been the composer of it), who says in his c. III: “This thing is not agreeable to the Canons of the Church, that is to say, for prelates to offer written resignations. For, if they are worthy to officiate, let them do so, and not resign; but if they are unworthy, let them not evade the episcopate with a resignation, but as persons condemned for things they have been charged with by many outcries. This same conclusion may be inferred also from c. XVI of the 1st-and-2nd. For, if that Canon deposes anyone that leaves his province for more than six months, and commands that another bishop be ordained in his stead, much more does it forbid anyone to resign his province altogether. Though that Canon does say for no one else to be ordained in the place of a living bishop unless the latter voluntarily resign his episcopate, yet it must be understood as implying that he is resigning on account of some professionally inhibitive and hidden reason. But further on this same Canon seems to correct even this. For it says for another bishop to be ordained after the cause of the living one be investigated and his deposition has been consummated.” Athanasius the Great, too, writes in his letter to Dracontius: “Before being installed as a bishop, a bishop lives for himself; but after being installed he no longer lives for himself, but for those Christians for whom he was installed in office.” But if they aver that St. Gregory the Theologian resigned, as is asserted also by Balsamon, let them learn that he did not resign an episcopate of his own, which was that of Sasima, but a strange episcopate, namely, that of Nazianzo, as he himself informs us. For in writing to St. Gregory of Nyssa he says: “Not of Nazianzo, but of Sasima we have been offered as candidates; though not without a little shamefacedness before the Father and the supplicants as strangers we have accepted the protection” (Note of Translator. — By “protection” is meant office). In writing to Philagrius, on the other hand, he says the following: “If it is dangerous, as you state, for one to leave his church, what church do you mean? If you mean our own, that of Sasima, that is to say, I too say the same thing, and the statement is correct. But if we have left the strange one, the one which has not been proclaimed to be connected with our name, that is to say, that of Nazianzo, we are exempt from responsibility. But if we are being held to account because we had charge of it for a while, there are plenty of others who will have to be held to account likewise, all those, in fact, who have had charge of strange provinces for a while.” As for the fact, first, that resignations are not allowable, this is plain from what has been said; and as for the fact, secondly, that those resigning (especially as a result of laziness and indolence) must not be permitted to retain the honor of a bishop and the name and activity, this too is evident from this letter. For it says, in paraphrase, that “Eustathius came to the Council, begging for the honor and title of bishop. But if he is begging for these things, it is evident that he resigned them along with his resignation from the province; and as having resigned them he no longer possessed them; and justly so.” For the name bishop is not absolute, but relative. For a bishop must be the bishop of an episcopate. Whoever, therefore, has resigned his episcopate, evidently ought not even to be called a bishop (unless it be with the modification “former” or “formerly”), according to Blastaris and Zonaras. But if he ought not to bear the name of bishop, much more ought he not to enjoy either the honor or the activity of a bishop. For the honor and activity of the bishop are bestowed as a prize and reward by Ap. c. XXXVI as well as c. XVIII of Antioch, not upon the one resigning his province, but upon the one who goes indeed to his province, but on account of the withdrawal and disorder of the laity, he does not accept it. Hence in the case of those who resign from their province without any calamitous reason, and go to other provinces where there is greater profit and more money to be made, Synesius as well as Theophilus want no one to admit them to the altar, and not to call them to the presidency, but, when they enter the church, to ignore them like so many cattle occupying public seats of authority. That is why c. I of St. Cyril says that Bishop Peter “either ought to have the functions of a bishop, or, if he is not worthy to preside over the sacrificial altar, neither ought he to be honored with the name of bishop.” But what am I saying that those resigning ought not to have the honor and title of bishop? Why, they ought even to be excommunicated in case they fail to accept the protection of the flock which has been entrusted to them, in accordance with the above Canons, Ap. c. XXXVI and c. XVII of Antioch, until such time as they decide to take it in hand. For this reason it is amazing that this 3rd Ec. C. did not reprimand the bishops in Pamphylia for

failing to force Eustathius to accept the Church entrusted to him, but, instead of him, ordaining someone else. It appears, however, from the words of the letter that the bishops in Pamphylia wrangled a good deal about the inactivity of Eustathius, and that they opposed him and sought to coerce him. For it said, “there is no strong reason to quarrel with his incapacity.” Finally, when they saw that he could not be persuaded, and that the flock of Christ had been without a protector for a long time (that the time was long is evident from the use of the verb “remain” contained in the letter), they ordained Theodore in his stead. But if anyone should ask why the Council should have given Eustathius the honor and title and activity of a bishop at all, we answer that it did so mainly and primarily because, as we said, it was not because of any viciousness or negligence on his part, but solely because of his faintheartedness that he submitted this unreasonable resignation, on account of which, had Theodore not been ordained so soon, the Council certainly would have tried to compel him to take back his province, on the ground that he had no canonical excuse for not doing so. Incidentally the Council did this when it sympathized with his tears and his old age. Canon X of Peter the martyr, too, does not consider it reasonable for men to remain in the ministry after they leave the flock of the Lord and go of their own accord to martyrdom, and first deny, and then struggle again, and finally confess the faith. Note also the further observation that in case a prelate wishing to resign from his province offers the pretext that he is unworthy, he must not be listened to, unless he be proved to be unworthy of the prelacy. For it is one thing for one not to be worthy, in a negative sense, and another thing for one to be unworthy, in a privative sense. For any man is unworthy of the prelacy who has committed canonical offenses and has been deprived of worthiness on that account. For, according to philosophers, privations come second after habits. Wherefore he ought to be deposed. But one is not worthy not only who is guilty of such canonical offenses, but also one who is not guilty of such offenses, but rather to say who is virtuous and saintly, yet who as respecting the magnitude and sublimity of the gift of the prelacy is not really worthy, as St. Basil the Great expresses it, and as divine Chrysostom says in his liturgies, in the prayer of the cherubic hymn, which prayer includes the following words: “No one addicted to carnal desires and pleasures is worthy to approach and to come near, or to minister, unto Thee, O King of glory. For serving Thee is something great and fearful even to the heavenly powers themselves.” On this account, as Balsamon says in his commentary on c. XVI of the 1st- & 2nd, the resignation of Theodoulos of Makre, though accepted without examination by Patriarch Luke, yet, when thereafter examined synodically by Patriarch Michael of Anchialos, it was not accepted, but, on the contrary, was rejected because it stated that he was resigning the episcopate, not as unworthy, but as not worthy. For every unworthy person may be described as not worthy, but it is not conversely true that whoever is not worthy is also unworthy. For anyone that asserts himself to be unworthy becomes self-condemned, whereas anyone that says that he is not worthy ought rather to be praised as being humble-minded. Accordingly, in order to finish this Footnote, I may say that there is no excuse for a prelate’s resigning from his province, excepting only this, that he has been involved in offenses that inhibit the exercise of prelatical functions, either hidden and undisclosed offenses only confessed to a father confessor, or plainly evident, and consequently not deposed by the Council. For at that time being rebuked by his own conscience, he has a good excuse for resigning the prelacy at the same time, and no one can prevent it. Such a person, in fact, is not prevented from becoming a monk. See also c. II of St. Sophia, and especially c. III of Cyril, and the testimony of Chrysostom contained in the footnote; and the commentary on c. XXVI of the 6th and the Footnote thereto, and the Footnote to c. IX of the First Ec. C. See also the form for a canonical resignation at the end of this Handbook.

